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(71) Applicant: IGT [US/US]; 9295 Prototype Drive, Reno, NV 89511 (US).

(72) Inventor: CHAMBERLAIN, John; 1855 Rock Ct., Carson City, NV 89701 (US).

(74) Agent: HIRSCH, Martin, J.; Marshall, Gerstein & Borun, 6300 Sears Tower, 233 South Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606 (US).

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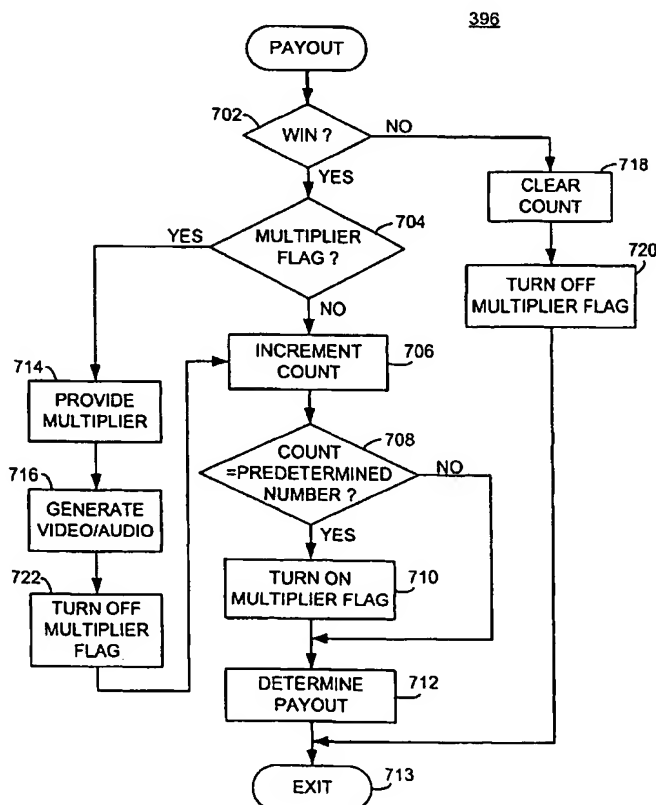
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(57) Abstract: A casino gaming apparatus may include a display unit capable of generating video images, a value input device, and a controller operatively coupled to the display unit. The controller may comprise a processor and a memory and may be programmed to allow a person to make a wager, to cause a video to be generated on the display unit, to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winnings games, and to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning the given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, the bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning the subsequent game without previously winning the given number of consecutive winning games.

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GAMING APPARATUS WITH BONUS PRIZE FOR CONSECUTIVE WINS

Background of the Invention

The present invention is directed to a gaming apparatus that is capable of providing a consecutive wins multiplier, the gaming apparatus allowing customers to play casino games such as poker, blackjack, slot, keno, and bingo.

5 Casino gaming units that provide a bonus based on a bonus game or round are generally known in the art. In particular, the bonus game or round may be provided if certain conditions are met. A player may be provided with a listing of certain conditions to reach the bonus game or round. For example, a bonus game may be played if a player achieves a certain configuration of symbols in a slot game. In
10 another example, a bonus round may be played during a casino game if a player accumulates a particular number of credits. As a result, players may be accustomed to the typical ways of achieving additional payout of value or credits.

Summary of the Invention

15 In one aspect, the invention is directed to a casino gaming apparatus that may include a display unit capable of generating video images, a value input device, and a controller operatively coupled to the display unit. The controller may comprise a processor and a memory and may be programmed to allow a person to make a wager, to cause a video image to be generated on the display unit, to determine if a person has
20 won a given number of consecutive games and to determine a bonus value payout if a person has won a subsequent game after winning the given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, the bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number multiple and a whole-number multiple of a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning the subsequent game without previously
25 winning the given number of consecutive winning games.

The video image may represent a video casino game selected from the group of video casino games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo, in which case the video image may comprise an image of a plurality of playing cards if the video casino game comprises video poker; the video image may
30 comprise an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if the video casino

game comprises video slots; the video image may comprise an image of a plurality of playing cards if the video casino game comprises video blackjack; the video image may comprise an image of a plurality of keno numbers if the video casino game comprises video keno; and the video image may comprise an image of a bingo grid if the video casino game comprises video bingo.

The controller may be programmed with a software counter that is reset in response to a loss of a game. The controller may be programmed to generate one or more video images in response to the given number of consecutive winning games. The controller may be programmed to generate one or more audio segments in response to the given number of consecutive winning games.

The invention is also directed to a casino gaming method that may comprise causing a video game image to be generated, determining if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games that is being non-selectable by a player, and determining a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning the given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game such that the bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning the subsequent game without previously winning the given number of consecutive winning games.

In another aspect, the invention is directed to a memory having a computer program being capable of being used in connection with a gaming apparatus. The memory may comprise a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to allow a person to make a wager, a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to cause a video image to be generated on a display unit, a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games that is non-selectable by a player, and a fourth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent

game after winning the given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game such that the bonus value payout is based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning the subsequent game without previously winning the given number of consecutive winning games.

5 The features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of the detailed description of various embodiments, which is made with reference to the drawings, a brief description of which is provided below.

10 Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of an embodiment of a gaming system in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of an embodiment of one of the gaming units shown schematically in Fig. 1;

15 Fig. 2A illustrates an embodiment of a control panel for a gaming unit;

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of the electronic components of the gaming unit of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a main routine that may be performed during operation of one or more of the gaming units;

Fig. 5 is a flowchart of an alternative embodiment of a main routine that may be performed during operation of one or more of the gaming units;

Fig. 6 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video poker routine of Fig. 8;

Fig. 7 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be
25 displayed during performance of the video blackjack routine of Fig. 9;

Fig. 8 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video poker routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

Fig. 9 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video blackjack routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

Fig. 10 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the slots routine of Fig. 12;

Fig. 11 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video keno routine of Fig. 13;

5 Fig. 12 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a slots routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

Fig. 13 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video keno routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

10 Fig. 14 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video bingo routine of Fig. 15;

Fig. 15 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video bingo routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units; and

Fig. 16 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a payout multiplier routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units.

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Detailed Description of Various Embodiments

Fig. 1 illustrates an embodiment of a casino gaming system 10 in accordance with the invention. Referring to Fig. 1, the casino gaming system 10 may include a first group or network 12 of casino gaming units 20 operatively coupled to a network computer 22 via a network data link or bus 24. The casino gaming system 10 may include a second group or network 26 of casino gaming units 30 operatively coupled to a network computer 32 via a network data link or bus 34. The first and second gaming networks 12, 26 may be operatively coupled to each other via a network 40, which may comprise, for example, the Internet, a wide area network (WAN), or a local area network (LAN) via a first network link 42 and a second network link 44.

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The first network 12 of gaming units 20 may be provided in a first casino, and the second network 26 of gaming units 30 may be provided in a second casino located in a separate geographic location than the first casino. For example, the two casinos may be located in different areas of the same city, or they may be located in different states. The network 40 may include a plurality of network computers or server

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computers (not shown), each of which may be operatively interconnected. Where the network 40 comprises the Internet, data communication may take place over the communication links 42, 44 via an Internet communication protocol.

5 The network computer 22 may be a server computer and may be used to accumulate and analyze data relating to the operation of the gaming units 20. For example, the network computer 22 may continuously receive data from each of the gaming units 20 indicative of the dollar amount and number of wagers being made on each of the gaming units 20, data indicative of how much each of the gaming units 20 is paying out in winnings, etc. The network computer 32 may be a server computer
10 and may be used to perform the same or different functions in relation to the gaming units 30 as the network computer 22 described above.

Although each network 12, 26 is shown to include one network computer 22, 32 and four gaming units 20, 30, it should be understood that different numbers of computers and gaming units may be utilized. For example, the network 12 may
15 include a plurality of network computers 22 and tens or hundreds of gaming units 20, all of which may be interconnected via the data link 24. The data link 24 may provided as a dedicated hardwired link or a wireless link. Although the data link 24 is shown as a single data link 24, the data link 24 may comprise multiple data links.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of one possible embodiment of one or more of the
20 gaming units 20. Although the following description addresses the design of the gaming units 20, it should be understood that the gaming units 30 may have the same or different design as the gaming units 20 described below. It should be understood that the design of one or more of the gaming units 20 may be different than the design of other gaming units 20, and that the design of one or more of the gaming units 30
25 may be different than the design of other gaming units 30. Each gaming unit 20 may be any type of casino gaming unit and may have various different structures and methods of operation. For exemplary purposes, various designs of the gaming units 20 are described below, but it should be understood that numerous other designs may be utilized.

Referring to Fig. 2, the casino gaming unit 20 may include a housing or cabinet 50 and one or more input devices, which may include a coin slot or acceptor 52, a paper currency acceptor 54, a ticket reader/printer 56 and a card reader 58, which may be used to input value to the gaming unit 20. A value input device may include any
5 device that can accept value from a customer. As used herein, the term "value" may encompass gaming tokens, coins, paper currency, ticket vouchers, credit or debit cards, and any other object representative of value.

If provided on the gaming unit 20, the ticket reader/printer 56 may be used to read and/or print or otherwise encode ticket vouchers 60. The ticket vouchers 60 may
10 be composed of paper or another printable or encodable material and may have one or more of the following informational items printed or encoded thereon: the casino name, the type of ticket voucher, a validation number, a bar code with control and/or security data, the date and time of issuance of the ticket voucher, redemption instructions and restrictions, a description of an award, and any other information that
15 may be necessary or desirable. Different types of ticket vouchers 60 could be used, such as bonus ticket vouchers, cash-redemption ticket vouchers, casino chip ticket vouchers, extra game play ticket vouchers, merchandise ticket vouchers, restaurant ticket vouchers, show ticket vouchers, etc. The ticket vouchers 60 could be printed with an optically readable material such as ink, or data on the ticket vouchers 60 could
20 be magnetically encoded. The ticket reader/printer 56 may be provided with the ability to both read and print ticket vouchers 60, or it may be provided with the ability to only read or only print or encode ticket vouchers 60. In the latter case, for example, some of the gaming units 20 may have ticket printers 56 that may be used to print ticket vouchers 60, which could then be used by a player in other gaming units 20 that have
25 ticket readers 56.

If provided, the card reader 58 may include any type of card reading device, such as a magnetic card reader or an optical card reader, and may be used to read data from a card offered by a player, such as a credit card or a player tracking card. If
provided for player tracking purposes, the card reader 58 may be used to read data
30 from, and/or write data to, player tracking cards that are capable of storing data

representing the identity of a player, the identity of a casino, the player's gaming habits, etc.

The gaming unit 20 may include one or more audio speakers 62, a coin payout tray 64, an input control panel 66, and a color video display unit 70 for displaying
5 images relating to the game or games provided by the gaming unit 20. The audio speakers 62 may generate audio representing sounds such as the noise of spinning slot machine reels, a dealer's voice, music, announcements or any other audio related to a casino game. The input control panel 66 may be provided with a plurality of pushbuttons or touch-sensitive areas that may be pressed by a player to select games,
10 make wagers, make gaming decisions, etc.

Fig. 2A illustrates one possible embodiment of the control panel 66, which may be used where the gaming unit 20 is a slot machine having a plurality of mechanical or "virtual" reels. Referring to Fig. 2A, the control panel 66 may include a "See Pays" button 72 that, when activated, causes the display unit 70 to generate one or more
15 display screens showing the odds or payout information for the game or games provided by the gaming unit 20. As used herein, the term "button" is intended to encompass any device that allows a player to make an input, such as an input device that must be depressed to make an input selection or a display area that a player may simply touch. The control panel 66 may include a "Cash Out" button 74 that may be
20 activated when a player decides to terminate play on the gaming unit 20, in which case the gaming unit 20 may return value to the player, such as by returning a number of coins to the player via the payout tray 64.

If the gaming unit 20 provides a slots game having a plurality of reels and a plurality of paylines which define winning combinations of reel symbols, the control
25 panel 66 may be provided with a plurality of selection buttons 76, each of which allows the player to select a different number of paylines prior to spinning the reels. For example, five buttons 76 may be provided, each of which may allow a player to select one, three, five, seven or nine paylines.

If the gaming unit 20 provides a slots game having a plurality of reels, the
30 control panel 66 may be provided with a plurality of selection buttons 78 each of which

allows a player to specify a wager amount for each payline selected. For example, if the smallest wager accepted by the gaming unit 20 is a quarter (\$0.25), the gaming unit 20 may be provided with five selection buttons 78, each of which may allow a player to select one, two, three, four or five quarters to wager for each payline selected. In that case, if a player were to activate the "5" button 76 (meaning that five paylines were to be played on the next spin of the reels) and then activate the "3" button 78 (meaning that three coins per payline were to be wagered), the total wager would be \$3.75 (assuming the minimum bet was \$0.25).

The control panel 66 may include a "Max Bet" button 80 to allow a player to make the maximum wager allowable for a game. In the above example, where up to nine paylines were provided and up to five quarters could be wagered for each payline selected, the maximum wager would be 45 quarters, or \$11.25. The control panel 66 may include a spin button 82 to allow the player to initiate spinning of the reels of a slots game after a wager has been made.

In Fig. 2A, a rectangle is shown around the buttons 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82. It should be understood that that rectangle simply designates, for ease of reference, an area in which the buttons 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82 may be located. Consequently, the term "control panel" should not be construed to imply that a panel or plate separate from the housing 50 of the gaming unit 20 is required, and the term "control panel" may encompass a plurality or grouping of player activatable buttons.

Although one possible control panel 66 is described above, it should be understood that different buttons could be utilized in the control panel 66, and that the particular buttons used may depend on the game or games that could be played on the gaming unit 20. Although the control panel 66 is shown to be separate from the display unit 70, it should be understood that the control panel 66 could be generated by the display unit 70. In that case, each of the buttons of the control panel 66 could be a colored area generated by the display unit 70, and some type of mechanism may be associated with the display unit 70 to detect when each of the buttons was touched, such as a touch-sensitive screen.

Gaming Unit Electronics

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a number of components that may be incorporated in the gaming unit 20. Referring to Fig. 3, the gaming unit 20 may include a controller 100 that may comprise a program memory 102, a microcontroller or microprocessor (MP) 104, a random-access memory (RAM) 106 and an input/output (I/O) circuit 108, all of which may be interconnected via an address/data bus 110. It should be appreciated that although only one microprocessor 104 is shown, the controller 100 may include multiple microprocessors 104. Similarly, the memory of the controller 100 may include multiple RAMs 106 and multiple program memories 102. Although the I/O circuit 108 is shown as a single block, it should be appreciated that the I/O circuit 108 may include a number of different types of I/O circuits. The RAM(s) 104 and program memories 102 may be implemented as semiconductor memories, magnetically readable memories, and/or optically readable memories, for example.

Fig. 3 illustrates that the control panel 66, the coin acceptor 52, the bill acceptor 54, the card reader 58 and the ticket reader/printer 56 may be operatively coupled to the I/O circuit 108, each of those components being so coupled by either a unidirectional or bidirectional, single-line or multiple-line data link, which may depend on the design of the component that is used. The speaker(s) 62 may be operatively coupled to a sound circuit 112, that may comprise a voice- and sound-synthesis circuit or that may comprise a driver circuit. The sound-generating circuit 112 may be coupled to the I/O circuit 108.

As shown in Fig. 3, the components 52, 54, 56, 58, 66, 112 may be connected to the I/O circuit 108 via a respective direct line or conductor. Different connection schemes could be used. For example, one or more of the components shown in Fig. 3 may be connected to the I/O circuit 108 via a common bus or other data link that is shared by a number of components. Furthermore, some of the components may be directly connected to the microprocessor 104 without passing through the I/O circuit 108.

Overall Operation of Gaming Unit

One manner in which one or more of the gaming units 20 (and one or more of the gaming units 30) may operate is described below in connection with a number of flowcharts which represent a number of portions or routines of one or more computer programs, which may be stored in one or more of the memories of the controller 100. The computer program(s) or portions thereof may be stored remotely, outside of the gaming unit 20, and may control the operation of the gaming unit 20 from a remote location. Such remote control may be facilitated with the use of a wireless connection, or by an Internet interface that connects the gaming unit 20 with a remote computer (such as one of the network computers 22, 32) having a memory in which the computer program portions are stored. The computer program portions may be written in any high level language such as C, C+, C++ or the like or any low-level, assembly or machine language. By storing the computer program portions therein, various portions of the memories 102, 106 are physically and/or structurally configured in accordance with computer program instructions.

Fig. 4 is a flowchart of a main operating routine 200 that may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. Referring to Fig. 4, the main routine 200 may begin operation at block 202 during which an attraction sequence may be performed in an attempt to induce a potential player in a casino to play the gaming unit 20. The attraction sequence may be performed by displaying one or more video images on the display unit 70 and/or causing one or more sound segments, such as voice or music, to be generated via the speakers 62. The attraction sequence may include a scrolling list of games that may be played on the gaming unit 20 and/or video images of various games being played, such as video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno, video bingo, etc.

During performance of the attraction sequence, if a potential player makes any input to the gaming unit 20 as determined at block 204, the attraction sequence may be terminated and a game-selection display may be generated on the display unit 70 at block 206 to allow the player to select a game available on the gaming unit 20. The gaming unit 20 may detect an input at block 204 in various ways. For example, the

gaming unit 20 could detect if the player presses any button on the gaming unit 20; the gaming unit 20 could determine if the player deposited one or more coins into the gaming unit 20; the gaming unit 20 could determine if player deposited paper currency into the gaming unit; etc.

5 The game-selection display generated at block 206 may include, for example, a list of video games that may be played on the gaming unit 20 and/or a visual message to prompt the player to deposit value into the gaming unit 20. While the game-selection display is generated, the gaming unit 20 may wait for the player to make a game selection. Upon selection of one of the games by the player as determined at block
10 208, the controller 100 may cause one of a number of game routines to be performed to allow the selected game to be played. For example, the game routines could include a video poker routine 210, a video blackjack routine 220, a slot routine 230, a video keno routine 240, and a video bingo routine 250. At block 208, if no game selection is made within a given period of time, the operation may branch back to block 202.

15 After one of the routines 210, 220, 230, 240, 250 has been performed to allow the player to play one of the games, block 260 may be utilized to determine whether the player wishes to terminate play on the gaming unit 20 or to select another game. If the player wishes to stop playing the gaming unit 20, which wish may be expressed, for example, by selecting a "Cash Out" button, the controller 100 may dispense value
20 to the player at block 262 based on the outcome of the game(s) played by the player. The operation may then return to block 202. If the player did not wish to quit as determined at block 260, the routine may return to block 208 where the game-selection display may again be generated to allow the player to select another game.

 It should be noted that although five gaming routines are shown in Fig. 4, a
25 different number of routines could be included to allow play of a different number of games. The gaming unit 20 may also be programmed to allow play of different games.

 Fig. 5 is a flowchart of an alternative main operating routine 300 that may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. The main routine 300 may be utilized for gaming units 20 that are designed to allow play of only a single game or single type of
30 game. Referring to Fig. 5, the main routine 300 may begin operation at block 302

during which an attraction sequence may be performed in an attempt to induce a potential player in a casino to play the gaming unit 20. The attraction sequence may be performed by displaying one or more video images on the display unit 70 and/or causing one or more sound segments, such as voice or music, to be generated via the speakers 62.

During performance of the attraction sequence, if a potential player makes any input to the gaming unit 20 as determined at block 304, the attraction sequence may be terminated and a game display may be generated on the display unit 70 at block 306. The game display generated at block 306 may include, for example, an image of the casino game that may be played on the gaming unit 20 and/or a visual message to prompt the player to deposit value into the gaming unit 20. At block 308, the gaming unit 20 may determine if the player requested information concerning the game, in which case the requested information may be displayed at block 310. Block 312 may be used to determine if the player requested initiation of a game, in which case a game routine 320 may be performed. The game routine 320 could be any one of the game routines disclosed herein, such as one of the five game routines 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, or another game routine.

After the routine 320 has been performed to allow the player to play the game, block 322 may be utilized to determine whether the player wishes to terminate play on the gaming unit 20. If the player wishes to stop playing the gaming unit 20, which wish may be expressed, for example, by selecting a "Cash Out" button, the controller 100 may dispense value to the player at block 324 based on the outcome of the game(s) played by the player. The operation may then return to block 302. If the player did not wish to quit as determined at block 322, the program may branch back to block 308.

Video Poker

Fig. 6 is an exemplary display 350 that may be shown on the display unit 70 during performance of the video poker routine 210 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 6, the display 350 may include video images 352 of a plurality of playing cards representing the player's hand, such as five cards. To allow the player to control the play of the video poker game, a plurality of player-selectable buttons may be displayed. The buttons may include a "Hold" button 354 disposed directly below each of the playing card images 352, a "Cash Out" button 356, a "See Pays" button 358, a "Bet One Credit" button 360, a "Bet Max Credits" button 362, and a "Deal/Draw" button 364. The display 350 may also include an area 366 in which the number of remaining credits or value is displayed. If the display unit 70 is provided with a touch-sensitive screen, the buttons 354, 356, 358, 360, 362, 364 may form part of the video display 350. Alternatively, one or more of those buttons may be provided as part of a control panel that is provided separately from the display unit 70.

Fig. 8 is a flowchart of the video poker routine 210 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 8, at block 370, the routine may determine whether the player has requested payout information, such as by activating the "See Pays" button 358, in which case at block 372 the routine may cause one or more pay tables to be displayed on the display unit 70. At block 374, the routine may determine whether the player has made a bet, such as by pressing the "Bet One Credit" button 360, in which case at block 376 bet data corresponding to the bet made by the player may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. At block 378, the routine may determine whether the player has pressed the "Bet Max Credits" button 362, in which case at block 380 bet data corresponding to the maximum allowable bet may be stored in the memory of the controller 100.

At block 382, the routine may determine if the player desires a new hand to be dealt, which may be determined by detecting if the "Deal/Draw" button 364 was activated after a wager was made. In that case, at block 384 a video poker hand may be "dealt" by causing the display unit 70 to generate the playing card images 352. After the hand is dealt, at block 386 the routine may determine if any of the "Hold" buttons 354 have been activated by the player, in which case data regarding which of

the playing card images 352 are to be “held” may be stored in the controller 100 at block 388. If the “Deal/Draw” button 364 is activated again as determined at block 390, each of the playing card images 352 that was not “held” may be caused to disappear from the video display 350 and to be replaced by a new, randomly selected, playing card image 352 at block 392.

The poker routine 210 may determine whether the poker hand represented by the playing card images 352 currently displayed is a winner during a payout routine 396 as described in detail below. That determination may be made by comparing data representing the currently displayed poker hand with data representing all possible winning hands, which may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. If there is a winning hand, a payout value corresponding to the winning hand may be determined by the payout routine 396. At block 398, the player’s cumulative value or number of credits may be updated by subtracting the bet made by the player and adding, if the hand was a winner, the payout value determined by the payout routine 396. The cumulative value or number of credits may also be displayed in the display area 366 (Fig. 6).

Although the video poker routine 210 is described above in connection with a single poker hand of five cards, the routine 210 may be modified to allow other versions of poker to be played. For example, seven card poker may be played, or stud poker may be played. Alternatively, multiple poker hands may be simultaneously played. In that case, the game may begin by dealing a single poker hand, and the player may be allowed to hold certain cards. After deciding which cards to hold, the held cards may be duplicated in a plurality of different poker hands, with the remaining cards for each of those poker hands being randomly determined.

Video Blackjack

Fig. 7 is an exemplary display 400 that may be shown on the display unit 70 during performance of the video blackjack routine 220 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 7, the display 400 may include video images 402 of a pair of playing cards representing a dealer’s hand, with one of the cards shown face up and the other card being shown face down, and video images 404 of a pair of playing cards

representing a player's hand, with both the cards shown face up. The "dealer" may be the gaming unit 20.

To allow the player to control the play of the video blackjack game, a plurality of player-selectable buttons may be displayed. The buttons may include a "Cash Out" button 406, a "See Pays" button 408, a "Stay" button 410, a "Hit" button 412, a "Bet One Credit" button 414, and a "Bet Max Credits" button 416. The display 400 may also include an area 418 in which the number of remaining credits or value is displayed. If the display unit 70 is provided with a touch-sensitive screen, the buttons 406, 408, 410, 412, 414, 416 may form part of the video display 400. Alternatively, one or more of those buttons may be provided as part of a control panel that is provided separately from the display unit 70.

Fig. 9 is a flowchart of the video blackjack routine 220 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 9, the video blackjack routine 220 may begin at block 420 where it may determine whether a bet has been made by the player. That may be determined, for example, by detecting the activation of either the "Bet One Credit" button 414 or the "Bet Max Credits" button 416. At block 422, bet data corresponding to the bet made at block 420 may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. At block 424, a dealer's hand and a player's hand may be "dealt" by making the playing card images 402, 404 appear on the display unit 70.

At block 426, the player may be allowed to be "hit," in which case at block 428 another card will be dealt to the player's hand by making another playing card image 404 appear in the display 400. If the player has hit, block 430 may determine if the player has "bust," or exceeded 21. If the player has not bust, blocks 426 and 428 may be performed again to allow the player to be hit again.

If the player decides not to hit (i.e., to stand), at block 432 the routine may determine whether the dealer should be hit. Whether the dealer hits may be determined in accordance with predetermined rules, such as the dealer always hit if the dealer's hand totals 15 or less. If the dealer hits, at block 434 the dealer's hand may be dealt another card by making another playing card image 402 appear in the display 400. At block 436 the routine may determine whether the dealer has bust. If the dealer has not bust, blocks 432, 434 may be performed again to allow the dealer to be hit again.

If the dealer does not hit (i.e., stands), the payout routine 396 as described in detail below may determine the outcome of the blackjack game and a corresponding payout based on, for example, whether the player or the dealer has the higher hand that does not exceed 21. If the player has a winning hand, a payout value corresponding to the winning hand may be determined by the payout routine 396. At block 442, the player's cumulative value or number of credits may be updated by subtracting the bet made by the player and adding, if the player won, the payout value determined by the payout routine 396. The cumulative value or number of credits may also be displayed in the display area 418 (Fig. 7).

Slot

Fig. 10 is an exemplary display 450 that may be shown on the display unit 70 during performance of the slot routine 230 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 10, the display 450 may include video images 452 of a plurality of slot machine reels, each of the reels having a plurality of reel symbols 454 associated therewith. Although the display 450 shows five reel images 452, each of which may have three reel symbols 454 that are visible at a time, other reel configurations could be utilized. In an alternate embodiment, the gaming unit 20 may include a plurality of rotatable slot machine reels, each of the reels having a plurality of reel symbols disposed thereon. The gaming unit 20, for example, may include five rotatable slot machine reels, each of which may have three reel symbols that are visible at a time.

To allow the player to control the play of the slot game, a plurality of player-selectable buttons may be displayed. The buttons may include a "Cash Out" button 456, a "See Pays" button 458, a plurality of payline-selection buttons 460 each of which allows the player to select a different number of paylines prior to "spinning" the reels, a plurality of bet-selection buttons 462 each of which allows a player to specify a wager amount for each payline selected, a "Spin" button 464, and a "Max Bet" button 466 to allow a player to make the maximum wager allowable.

Fig. 12 is a flowchart of the slots routine 230 shown schematically in Fig. 10. Referring to Fig. 12, at block 470, the routine may determine whether the player has requested payout information, such as by activating the "See Pays" button 458, in

which case at block 472 the routine may cause one or more pay tables to be displayed on the display unit 70. At block 474, the routine may determine whether the player has pressed one of the payline-selection buttons 460, in which case at block 476 data corresponding to the number of paylines selected by the player may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. At block 478, the routine may determine whether the player has pressed one of the bet-selection buttons 462, in which case at block 480 data corresponding to the amount bet per payline may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. At block 482, the routine may determine whether the player has pressed the "Max Bet" button 466, in which case at block 484 bet data (which may include both payline data and bet-per-payline data) corresponding to the maximum allowable bet may be stored in the memory of the controller 100.

If the "Spin" button 464 has been activated by the player as determined at block 486, at block 488 the routine may cause the slot machine reel images 452 to begin "spinning" so as to simulate the appearance of a plurality of spinning mechanical slot machine reels. At block 490, the routine may determine the positions at which the slot machine reel images will stop, or the particular symbol images 454 that will be displayed when the reel images 452 stop spinning. At block 492, the routine may stop the reel images 452 from spinning by displaying stationary reel images 452 and images of three symbols 454 for each stopped reel image 452. The virtual reels may be stopped from left to right, from the perspective of the player, or in any other manner or sequence.

The routine may provide for the possibility of a bonus game or round if certain conditions are met, such as the display in the stopped reel images 452 of a particular symbol 454. If there is such a bonus condition as determined at block 494, the routine may proceed to block 496 where a bonus round may be played. The bonus round may be a different game than slots, and many other types of bonus games could be provided. If the player wins the bonus round, or receives additional credits or points in the bonus round, a bonus value may be determined at block 498. A payout value corresponding to outcome of the slots game and/or the bonus round may be determined by the payout routine 396 as described in detail below. At block 502, the player's cumulative value or number of credits may be updated by subtracting the bet made by

the player and adding, if the slot game and/or bonus round was a winner, the payout value determined by the payout routine 396.

Although the above routine has been described as a virtual slot machine routine in which slot machine reels are represented as images on the display unit 70, actual slot machine reels that are capable of being spun may be utilized instead.

Video Keno

Fig. 11 is an exemplary display 520 that may be shown on the display unit 70 during performance of the video keno routine 240 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 11, the display 520 may include a video image 522 of a plurality of numbers that were selected by the player prior to the start of a keno game and a video image 524 of a plurality of numbers randomly selected during the keno game. The randomly selected numbers may be displayed in a grid pattern.

To allow the player to control the play of the keno game, a plurality of player-selectable buttons may be displayed. The buttons may include a "Cash Out" button 526, a "See Pays" button 528, a "Bet One Credit" button 530, a "Bet Max Credits" button 532, a "Select Ticket" button 534, a "Select Number" button 536, and a "Play" button 538. The display 520 may also include an area 540 in which the number of remaining credits or value is displayed. If the display unit 70 is provided with a touch-sensitive screen, the buttons may form part of the video display 520. Alternatively, one or more of those buttons may be provided as part of a control panel that is provided separately from the display unit 70.

Fig. 13 is a flowchart of the video keno routine 240 shown schematically in Fig. 4. The keno routine 240 may be utilized in connection with a single gaming unit 20 where a single player is playing a keno game, or the keno routine 340 may be utilized in connection with multiple gaming units 20 where multiple players are playing a single keno game. In the latter case, one or more of the acts described below may be performed either by the controller 100 in each gaming unit or by one of the network computer 22, 32 to which multiple gaming units 20 are operatively connected.

Referring to Fig. 13, at block 550, the routine may determine whether the player has requested payout information, such as by activating the "See Pays" button

528, in which case at block 552 the routine may cause one or more pay tables to be displayed on the display unit 70. At block 554, the routine may determine whether the player has made a bet, such as by having pressed the "Bet One Credit" button 530 or the "Bet Max Credits" button 532, in which case at block 556 bet data corresponding to the bet made by the player may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. After the player has made a wager, at block 558 the player may select a keno ticket, and at block 560 the ticket may be displayed on the display 520. At block 562, the player may select one or more game numbers, which may be within a range set by the casino. After being selected, the player's game numbers may be stored in the memory of the controller 100 at block 564 and may be included in the image 522 on the display 520 at block 566. After a certain amount of time, the keno game may be closed to additional players (where a number of players are playing a single keno game using multiple gambling units 20).

If play of the keno game is to begin as determined at block 568, at block 570 a game number within a range set by the casino may be randomly selected either by the controller 100 or a central computer operatively connected to the controller, such as one of the network computers 22, 32. At block 572, the randomly selected game number may be displayed on the display unit 70 and the display units 70 of other gaming units 20 (if any) which are involved in the same keno game. At block 574, the controller 100 (or the central computer noted above) may increment a count which keeps track of how many game numbers have been selected at block 570.

At block 576, the controller 100 (or one of the network computers 22, 32) may determine whether a maximum number of game numbers within the range have been randomly selected. If not, another game number may be randomly selected at block 570. If the maximum number of game numbers has been selected, the controller 100 (or a central computer) may perform the payout routine 396 as described below to determine whether there are a sufficient number of matches between the game numbers selected by the player and the game numbers selected at block 570 to cause the player to win. The number of matches may depend on how many numbers the player selected and the particular keno rules being used.

If there are a sufficient number of matches, a payout may be determined by the payout routine 396 as described in detail below to compensate the player for winning the game. The payout may depend on the number of matches between the game numbers selected by the player and the game numbers randomly selected at block 570. At block 582, the player's cumulative value or number of credits may be updated by subtracting the bet made by the player and adding, if the keno game was won, the payout value determined by the payout routine 396. The cumulative value or number of credits may also be displayed in the display area 540 (Fig. 11).

Video Bingo

Fig. 14 is an exemplary display 600 that may be shown on the display unit 70 during performance of the video bingo routine 250 shown schematically in Fig. 4. Referring to Fig. 14, the display 600 may include one or more video images 602 of a bingo card and images of the bingo numbers selected during the game. The bingo card images 602 may have a grid pattern.

To allow the player to control the play of the bingo game, a plurality of player-selectable buttons may be displayed. The buttons may include a "Cash Out" button 604, a "See Pays" button 606, a "Bet One Credit" button 608, a "Bet Max Credits" button 610, a "Select Card" button 612, and a "Play" button 614. The display 600 may also include an area 616 in which the number of remaining credits or value is displayed. If the display unit 70 is provided with a touch-sensitive screen, the buttons may form part of the video display 600. Alternatively, one or more of those buttons may be provided as part of a control panel that is provided separately from the display unit 70.

Fig. 15 is a flowchart of the video bingo routine 250 shown schematically in Fig. 4. The bingo routine 250 may be utilized in connection with a single gaming unit 20 where a single player is playing a bingo game, or the bingo routine 250 may be utilized in connection with multiple gaming units 20 where multiple players are playing a single bingo game. In the latter case, one or more of the acts described below may be performed either by the controller 100 in each gaming unit 20 or by one of the

network computers 22, 32 to which multiple gaming units 20 are operatively connected.

Referring to Fig. 15, at block 620, the routine may determine whether the player has requested payout information, such as by activating the "See Pays" button 606, in which case at block 622 the routine may cause one or more pay tables to be displayed on the display unit 70. At block 624, the routine may determine whether the player has made a bet, such as by having pressed the "Bet One Credit" button 608 or the "Bet Max Credits" button 610, in which case at block 626 bet data corresponding to the bet made by the player may be stored in the memory of the controller 100.

After the player has made a wager, at block 628 the player may select a bingo card, which may be generated randomly. The player may select more than one bingo card, and there may be a maximum number of bingo cards that a player may select. After play is to commence as determined at block 632, at block 634 a bingo number may be randomly generated by the controller 100 or a central computer such as one of the network computers 22, 32. At block 636, the bingo number may be displayed on the display unit 70 and the display units 70 of any other gaming units 20 involved in the bingo game.

At block 638, the controller 100 (or a central computer) may determine whether any player has won the bingo game. If no player has won, another bingo number may be randomly selected at block 634. If any player has bingo as determined at block 638, the payout routine 396 as described in detail below may determine whether the player playing that gaming unit 20 was the winner. If so, a payout for the player may be determined by the payout routine 396. The payout may depend on the number of random numbers that were drawn before there was a winner, the total number of winners (if there was more than one player), and the amount of money that was wagered on the game. At block 644, the player's cumulative value or number of credits may be updated by subtracting the bet made by the player and adding, if the bingo game was won, the payout value determined by the payout routine 396. The cumulative value or number of credits may also be displayed in the display area 616 (Fig. 14).

Payout Routine

As mentioned above, a payout routine 396 may be utilized for any one of the game routines (i.e., the video poker routine 210, the blackjack routine 220, the slots routine 230, the video keno routine 240, and the video bingo routine 250). Fig. 16 is a flowchart of the payout routine 396 that may be stored in the memory of the controller 100. Referring to Fig. 16, the payout routine 396 may begin operation at block 702 to determine an outcome of a game. If the outcome of the current game is a win as determined at block 702, the controller 100 may determine at block 704 whether a multiplier flag is turned on. If the multiplier flag is turned off as determined at block 704, the controller 100 may increment at block 706 a count that keeps track of the number of consecutive wins by a player. The controller 100 may be programmed with a software counter to keep track of the number of consecutive wins by the player. Block 708 may be used to determine whether the count is equal to a given number of consecutive wins, i.e., whether the player won a given number of times. If the count is equal to the given number of consecutive wins as determined at block 708, the controller 100 may turn on at block 710 the multiplier flag that may activate a multiplier used to determine a bonus value payout for the subsequent game (i.e., next game) as described in detail below. At block 712, the controller 100 may determine a normal value payout associated with the outcome of the current game. At block 713, the payout routine 396 may terminate and the controller 100 may return to the game routine to update the player's cumulative value or number of credits.

Returning to block 704, if the multiplier flag is turned on as determined at block 704, the controller 100 may provide at block 714 a multiplier to determine a bonus value payout, which may be a whole-number multiple of the normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning the subsequent game without previously winning the given number of consecutive winning games. At block 716, the controller 100 may generate one or more video images and/or one or more audio segments to indicate the number of consecutive wins by the player. Block 722 may be used to reset by turning off the multiplier flag, and returns to block 706 to keep track of the number of consecutive wins by a player. As noted above, block 708 may be used to determine

whether the count is equal to a given number of consecutive wins, i.e., whether the player won a given number of times. If the count is equal to the given number of consecutive wins as determined at block 708, the controller 100 may turn on at block 710 the multiplier flag that may activate a multiplier used to determine a bonus value payout for the subsequent game (i.e., next game). In an alternate embodiment, block 708 may be used to determine whether the count is equal to or greater than a given number of consecutive wins so that a player may be awarded a bonus even after winning the given number of consecutive wins. Block 712 may be used to determine the bonus value payout associated with the outcome of the game based upon the multiplier. For example, multiply fixed or variable bonus as used herein, the term “multiply” is used in its broadest sense to mean an increased or enhancement of an award value. At block 713, the payout routine 396 may terminate and the controller 100 may return to the game routine to update the player’s cumulative value or number of credits.

If the player lost the current game as determined at block 702, the controller 100 at block 718 may clear the count that keeps track the number of consecutive wins by the player and block 720 may be used to turn off the multiplier flag in response to the player losing the current game. At block 713, the payout routine 396 may terminate, and the controller 100 may return to the game routine to update the player’s cumulative value or number of credits.

In an example of a performance of the payout routine 396, the given number of consecutive wins may be eight and the current game is an eighth game for a player, who may have won his seven previous games (i.e., the consecutive win count is at seven). The controller 100 may determine at block 702 that the player won the current game (i.e., the eighth game). At block 704, the controller 100 may determine that the multiplier flag is not turned on by the outcome of the previous game (i.e., the seventh game). Accordingly, the controller 100 may increment at block 706 the count to eight in response to the player winning the current game (i.e., the eighth game). At block 708, the controller 100 may determine that the count is equal to the given number of consecutive wins. As a result, the controller 100 may turn on at block 710 the

multiplier flag that may provide a multiplier used to determine the bonus value payout associated with the outcome of the subsequent game (i.e., the ninth game). Block 712 may be used to determine the normal value payout associated with the outcome of the current game (i.e., the eighth game):

5 If the player decides to play the ninth game (i.e., the subsequent game) with the multiplier flag turned on at block 710 in response to winning of the eighth game, the controller 100 may determine at block 702 the outcome of the ninth game. If the player won the ninth game as determined at block 702, the controller 100 may determine at block 704 whether the multiplier flag is turned on based on the outcome of the eighth
10 game. As noted above, the multiplier flag may be turned on at block 710 based on whether the count is equal to the given number of consecutive wins (i.e., the count is equal to the given number of consecutive wins of eight). Accordingly, the controller 100 may provide at block 714 a multiplier in response to the ninth game being a win, and may turn off the multiplier flag at block 722. The controller 100 may increment
15 at block 706 the count to nine in response to the player winning the current game (i.e., the ninth game). At block 708, the controller 100 may determine that the count is not equal to the given number of consecutive wins. As a result, the controller 100 may determine at block 712 the bonus value payout associated with the ninth game based upon then normal value payout associated with the outcome of the ninth game and the
20 multiplier provided by block 714. For example, if the multiplier is nine, the controller 100 may multiple the normal value payout associated with the ninth game by nine. In an alternate embodiment as noted above, the controller 100 at block 708 may determine whether the count is equal to or greater than the given number of consecutive wins. Accordingly, at block 708, the controller 100 may determine that the count is equal to
25 or greater than the given number of consecutive wins (i.e., nine is greater than eight). The controller 100 may turn on at block 710 the multiplier flag for the next game (i.e., the tenth game) and may determine at block 712 the bonus value payout associated with the ninth game based upon then normal value payout associated with the outcome of the ninth game and the multiplier provided by block 714 (e.g., the multiplier is ten).

As a result, if the player wins the tenth game then the payout routine 396 may operate as described above.

5 If the player lost the ninth game in the above example, the controller 100 may reset at block 718 the consecutive win count (i.e., the count is reset to zero from eight) and turn off at block 720 the multiplier flag. Accordingly, a bonus value payout may not be determined.

10 Numerous modifications and alternative embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of the foregoing description. This description is to be construed as illustrative only, and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the best mode of carrying out the invention. The details of the structure and method may be varied substantially without departing from the spirit of the invention, and the exclusive use of all modifications which come within the scope of the appended claims is reserved.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gaming apparatus, comprising:
 - a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
 - a value input device;
 - a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,
 - said controller being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,
 - said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a game selected from the group of games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slot, video keno and video bingo,
 - said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video poker,
 - said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slot,
 - said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,
 - said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno,
 - said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo,
 - said controller being programmed to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games, said given number of consecutive winning games being non-selectable by a player, and
 - said controller being programmed to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing

game, said bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number and a whole-number multiple of a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

2. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said controller is programmed with a software counter that is reset in response to a loss of a game.

3. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more video images in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

4. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more audio segments in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

5. A gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 1, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

6. A gaming system as defined in claim 5, wherein said gaming apparatuses are interconnected via the Internet.

7. A gaming apparatus, comprising:
a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
a value input device;
a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor;

said controller being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,

said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a casino game,

said controller being programmed to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games, said given number of consecutive winning games being non-selectable by a player, and

said controller being programmed to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

8. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein said controller is programmed to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number multiple and a whole-number multiple of said normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

9. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein said controller is programmed with a software counter that is reset in response to loss of a game.

10. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more video images in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

11. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more audio segments in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

12. A gaming system, comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 7, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

13. A gaming apparatus, comprising:
a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
a value input device;
a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,
said controller being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,
said controller being programmed to allow a person to make a payline selection,
said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image comprising a plurality of simulated slot machine reels of a slot game, each of said slot machine reels having a plurality of slot machine symbols,
said controller being programmed to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games, said given number of consecutive winning games being non-selectable by a player, and
said controller being programmed to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.
14. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein said controller is programmed to allow a user to select a number of paylines.

15. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein said controller is programmed to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number multiple and a whole-number multiple of said normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

16. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein said controller is programmed with a software counter that is reset in response to loss of a game.

17. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more video images in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

18. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more audio segments in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

19. A gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 13, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

20. A gaming method comprising:

causing a video game image to be generated, said video game image representing a game selected from the group of games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slot, video keno and video bingo,

said video game image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video game image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video game image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video game image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno, and

said video game image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo;

determining if a person has won a given number of consecutive winning games, said given number of consecutive winning games being non-selectable by a player; and

determining a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

21. A gaming method as defined in claim 20 additionally comprising determining a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number multiple and a whole-number multiple of said normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

22. A gaming method as defined in claim 20 additionally comprising generating one or more video images in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

23. A gaming method as defined in claim 20 additionally comprising generating one or more audio segments in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

24. A memory having a computer program stored therein, said computer program being capable of being used in connection with a gaming apparatus, said memory comprising:

a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to allow a person to make a wager;

a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to cause a video image to be generated on a display unit, said video image representing a game selected from the group of games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo,

said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno,

said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo,

a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games, said given number of consecutive winning games being non-selectable by a player; and

a fourth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

25. A memory as defined in claim 24, wherein said memory additionally comprises a fifth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine said bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number multiple and a whole-number multiple of said normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

26. A memory as defined in claim 24, wherein said memory additionally comprises a sixth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to generate one or more video images in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

27. A memory as defined in claim 24, wherein said memory additionally comprises a seventh portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to generate one or more audio segments in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

28. A gaming apparatus for playing a slot game, said gaming apparatus comprising:

a user input device;

a value input device;

a plurality of rotatable slot machine reels, each of said slot machine reels having a plurality of slot machine symbols disposed thereon;

a controller operatively coupled to said user input device, said value input device, and said slot machine reels, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

said controller being programmed to allow a player to make a wager,

said controller being programmed to allow a player to make a payline selection,

said controller being programmed to determine if a player has won a given number of consecutive winning games, said given number of consecutive winning games being non-selectable by a player, and

said controller being programmed to determine a bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being based on a normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games, said normal value payout associated with an outcome of said slot game

represented by a configuration of said slot machine symbols when said slot machine reels stop after having been rotated, and

said controller being programmed to cause an explanation of said normal value payout of said slot game based on the configuration of said slot machine symbols, said payline selection, and stored payout data in response to a person activating the user input device.

29. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein each of said slot machine reels comprises an image of a slot machine reel and wherein said slot machine reels are rotated by generating images of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels being rotated.

30. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein said controller is programmed to determine said bonus value payout if a player has won a subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game, said bonus value payout being one of a non-whole number multiple and a whole-number multiple of said normal value payout that would have been paid out for winning said subsequent game without previously winning said given number of consecutive winning games.

31. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein said controller is programmed with a software counter that is reset in response to a loss of a game.

32. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more video images in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

33. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein said controller is programmed to generate one or more audio segments in response to winning said subsequent game after winning said given number of consecutive winning games without an intervening losing game.

34. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein said slot machine reels comprises a plurality of mechanically rotatable reels and wherein said mechanically rotatable reels include a plurality of slot machine symbols formed thereon.

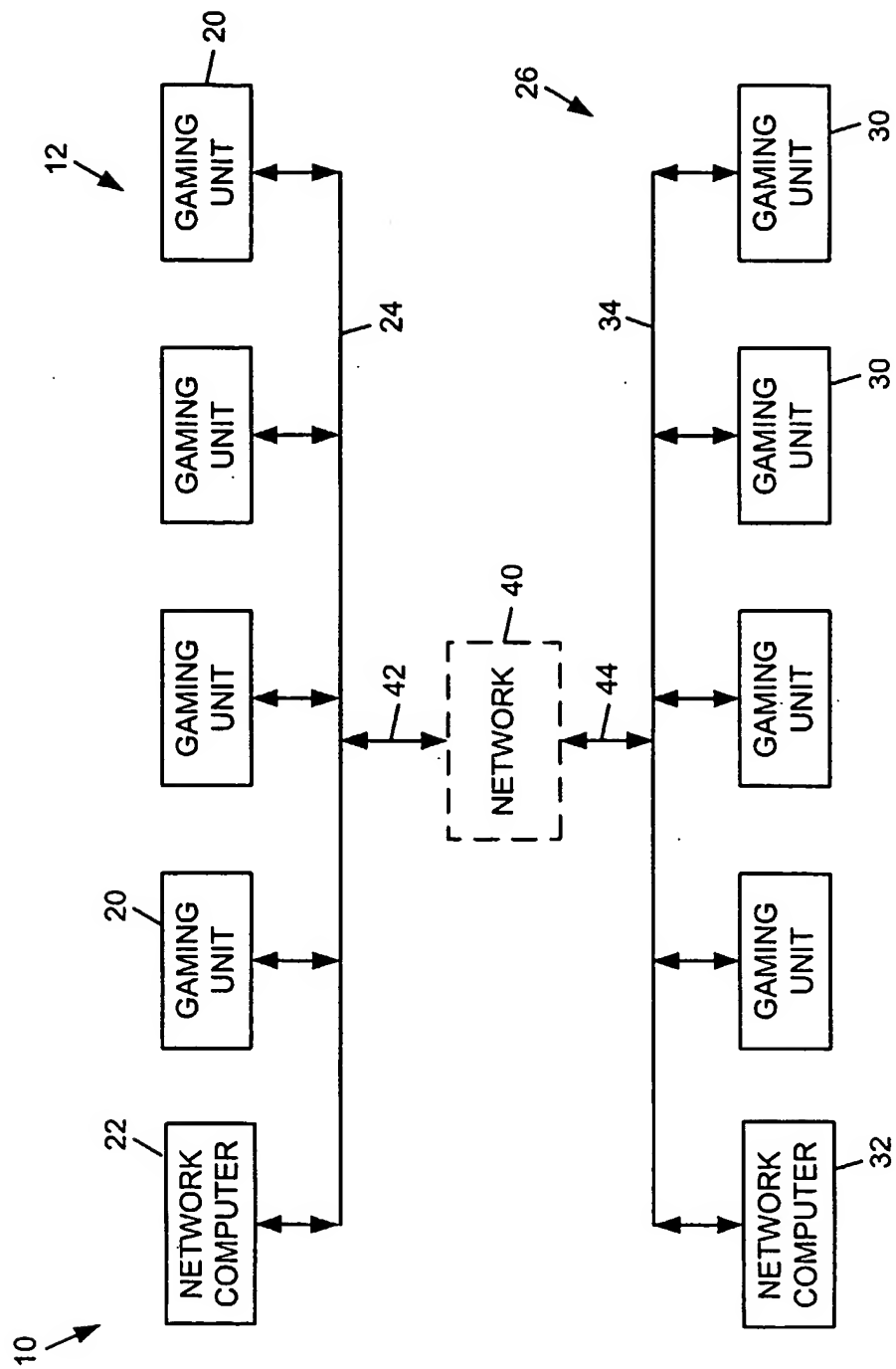


FIG. 1

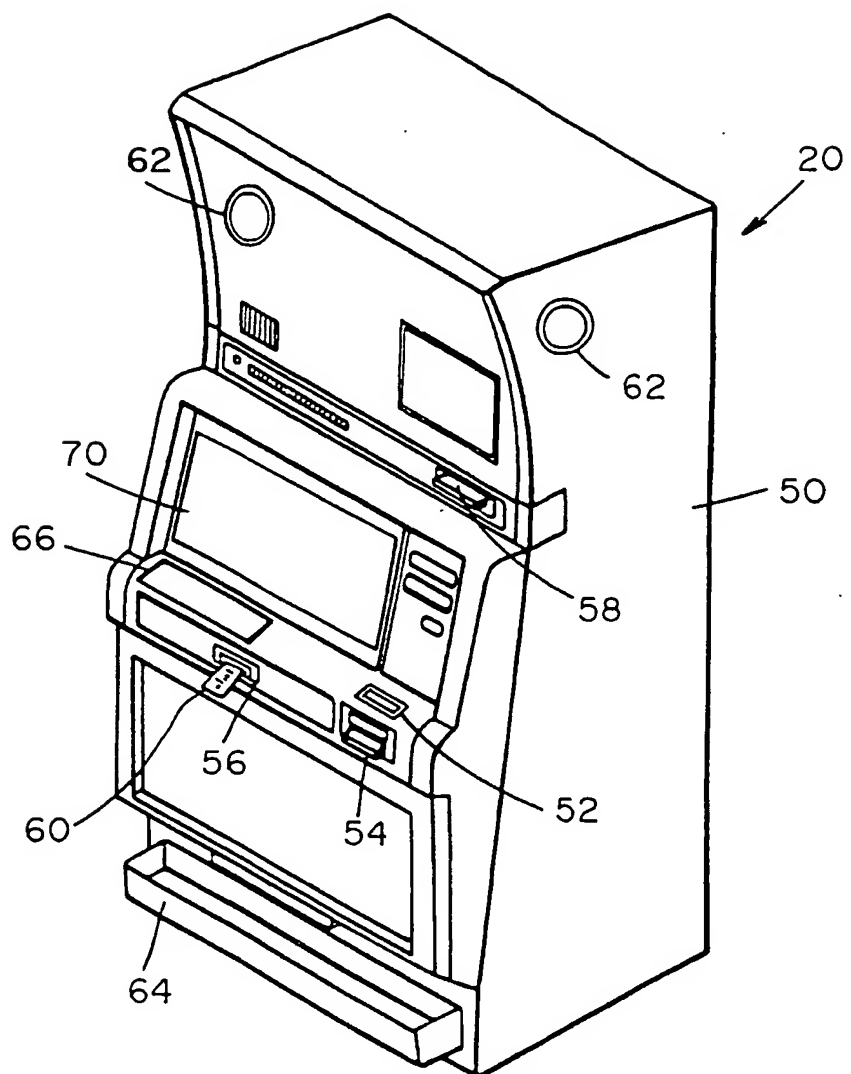


FIG. 2

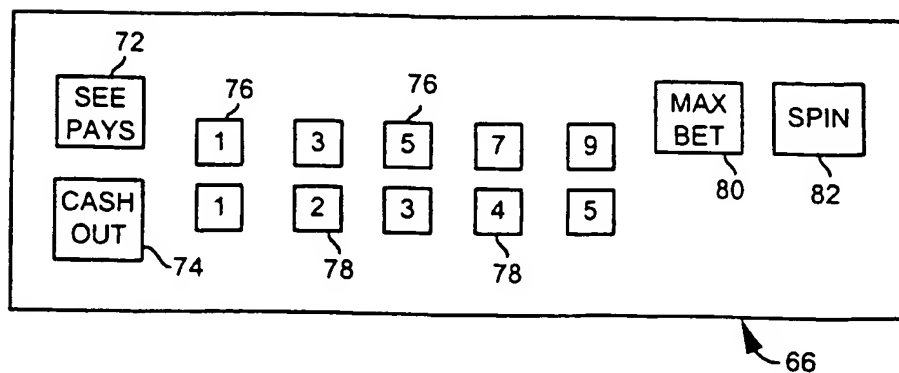


FIG. 2A

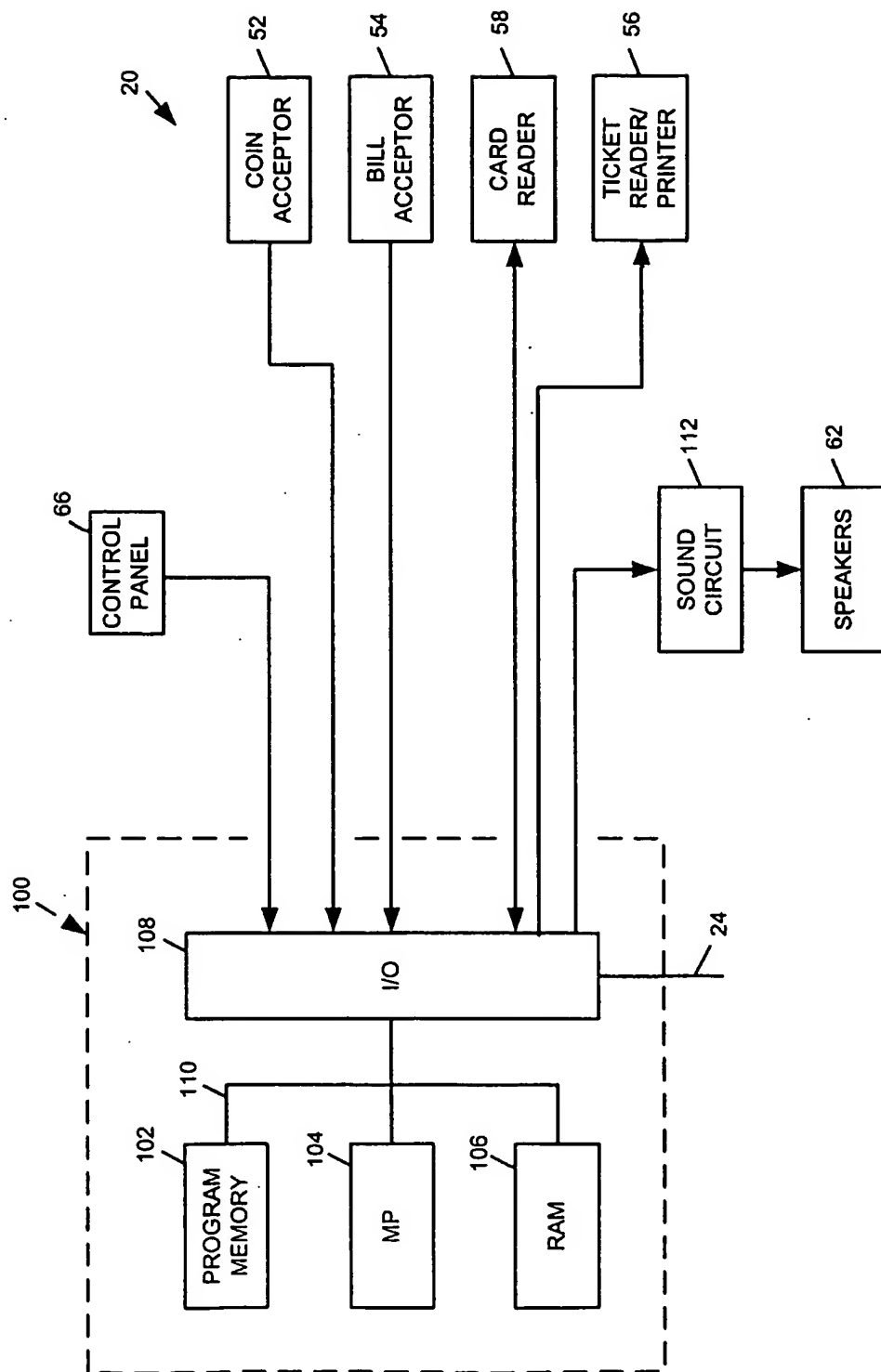


FIG. 3

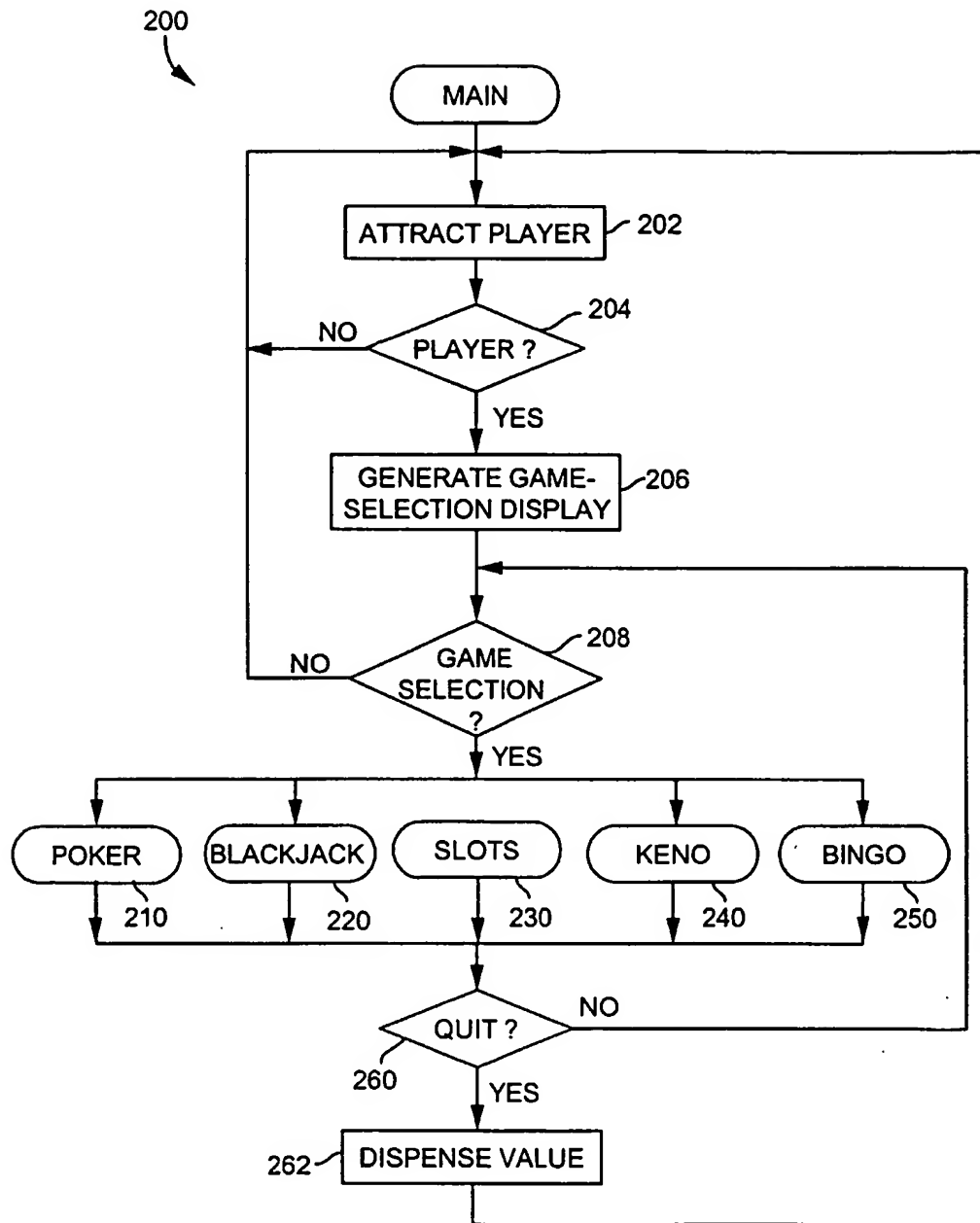
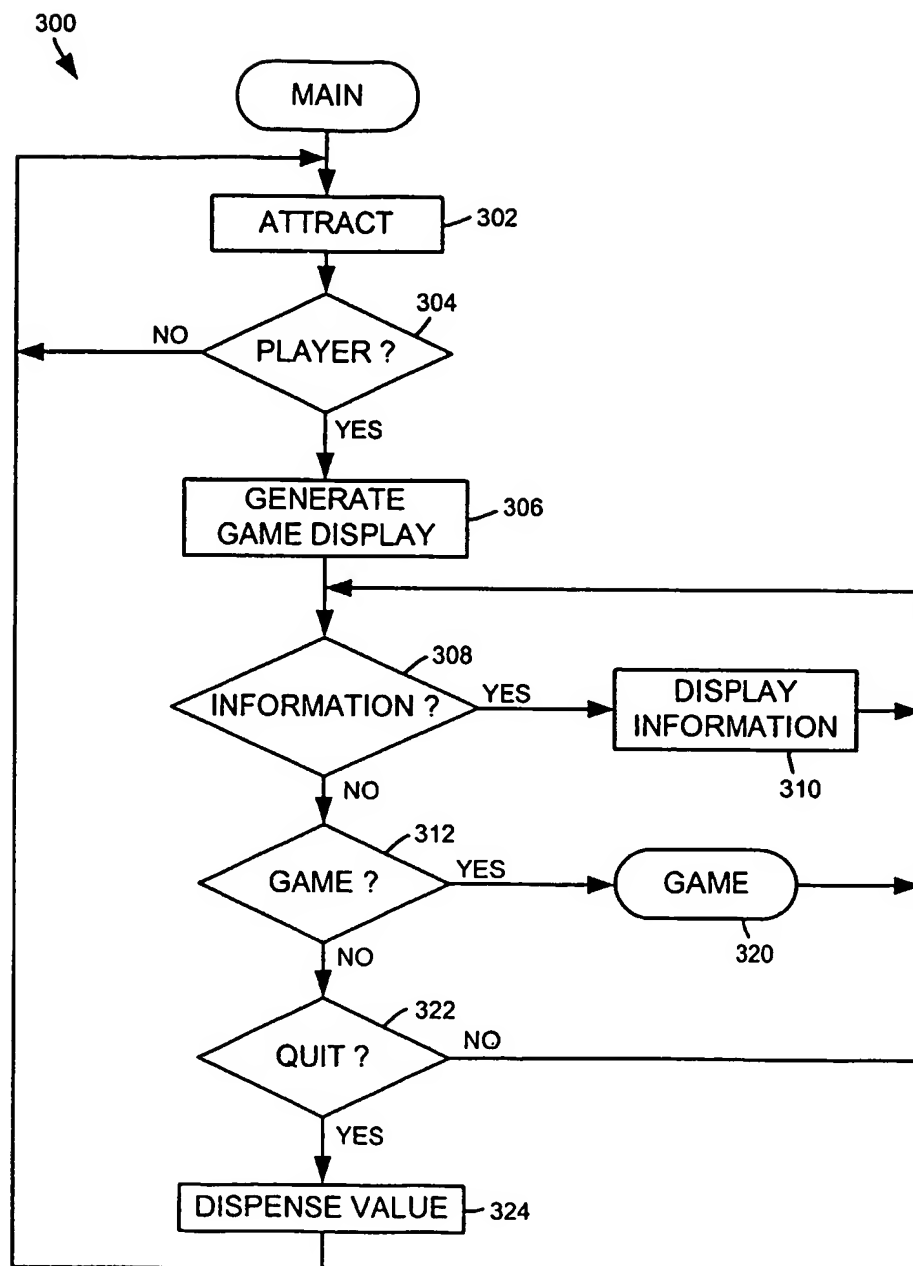


FIG. 4

FIG. 5



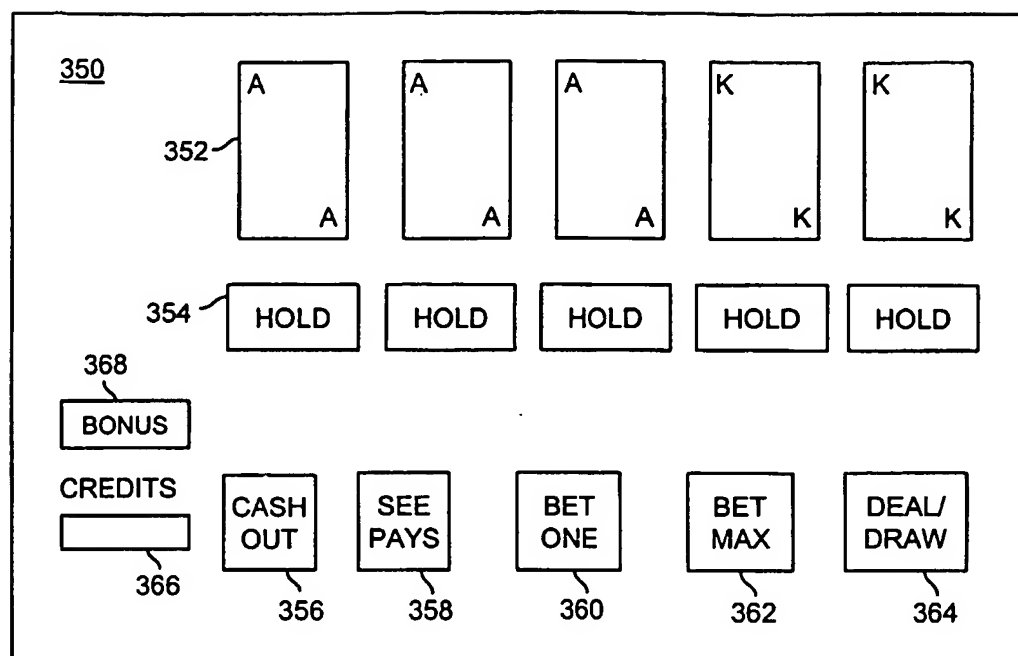


FIG. 6

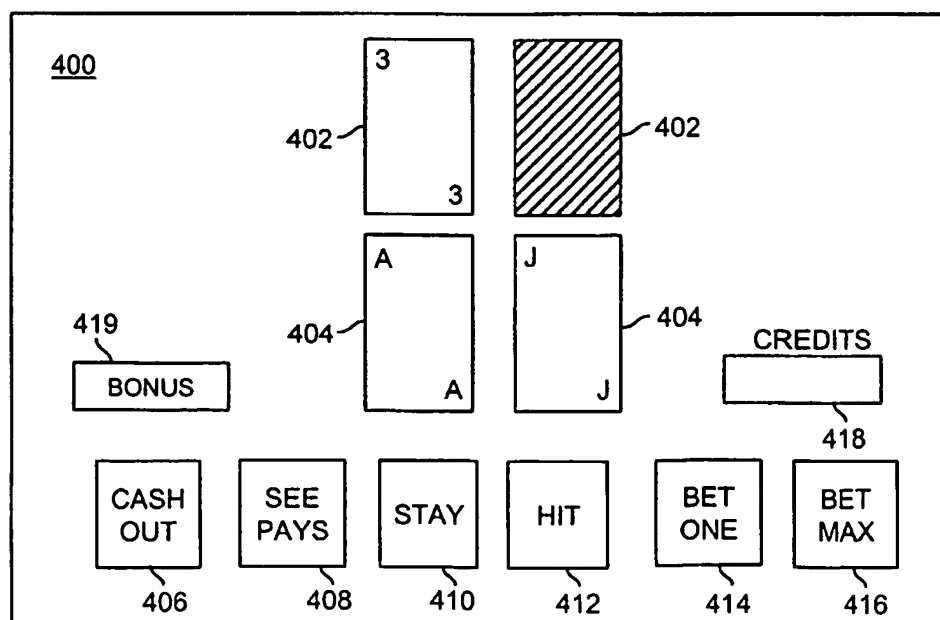


FIG. 7

FIG. 8

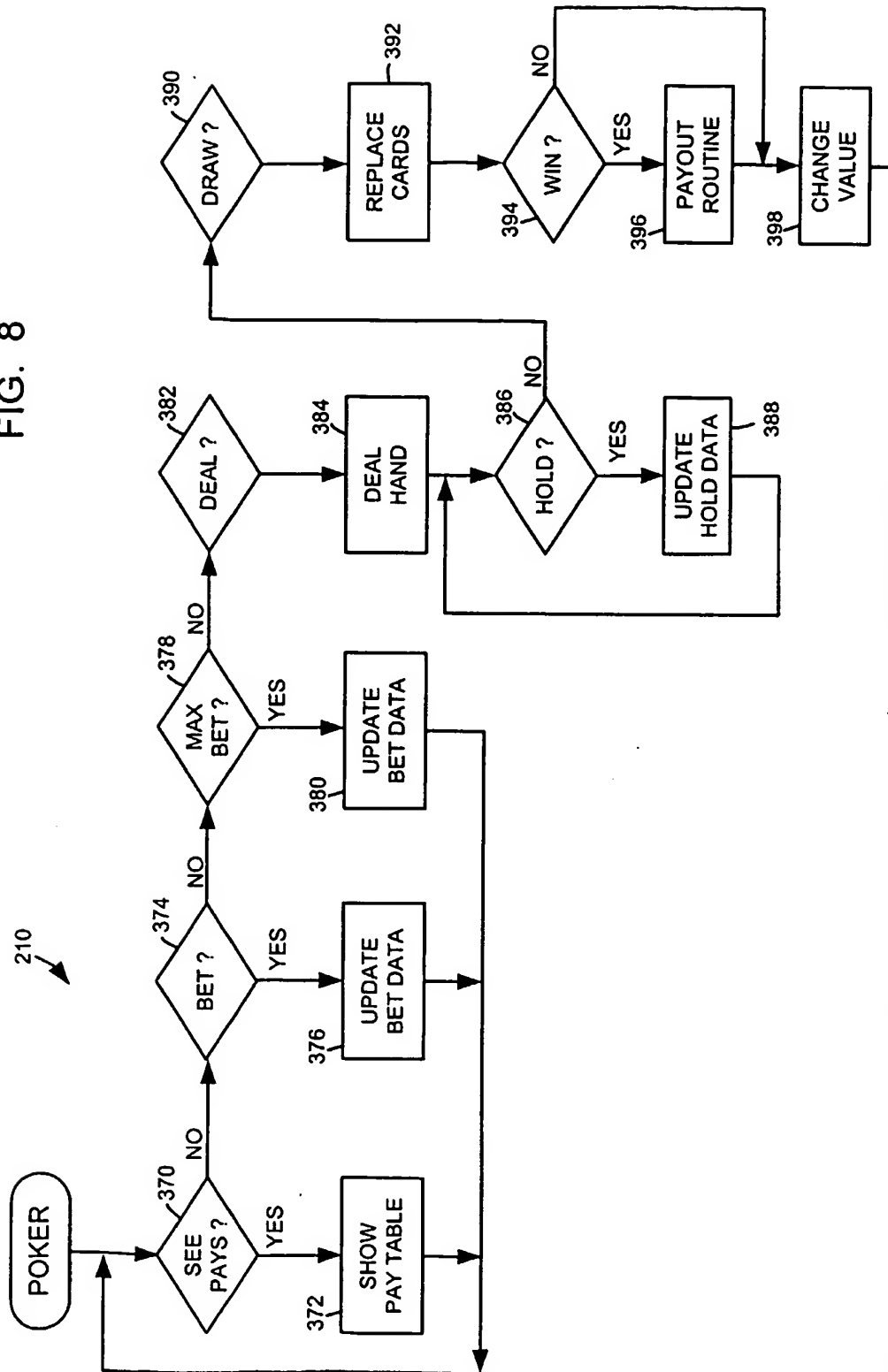


FIG. 9

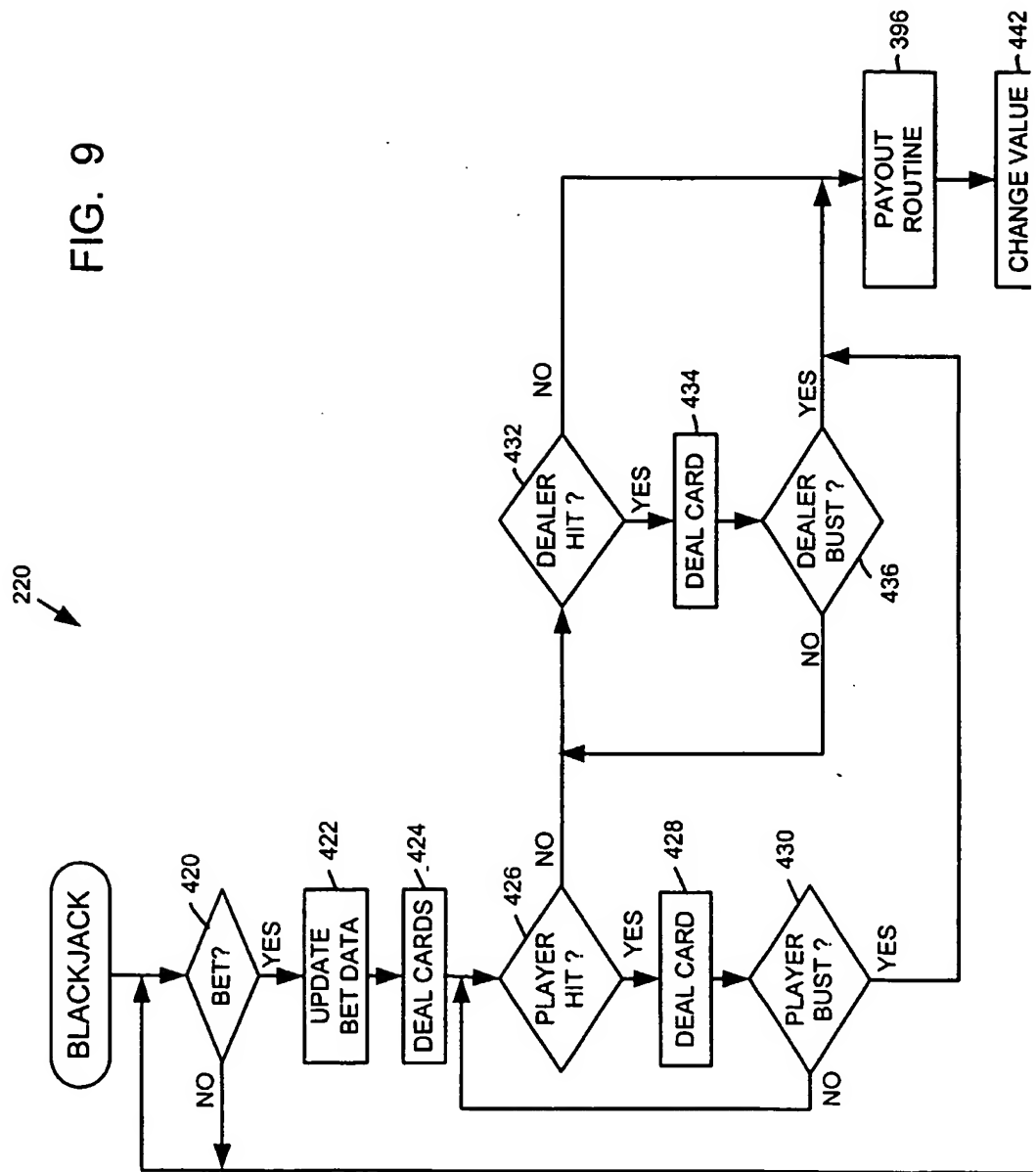


FIG. 10

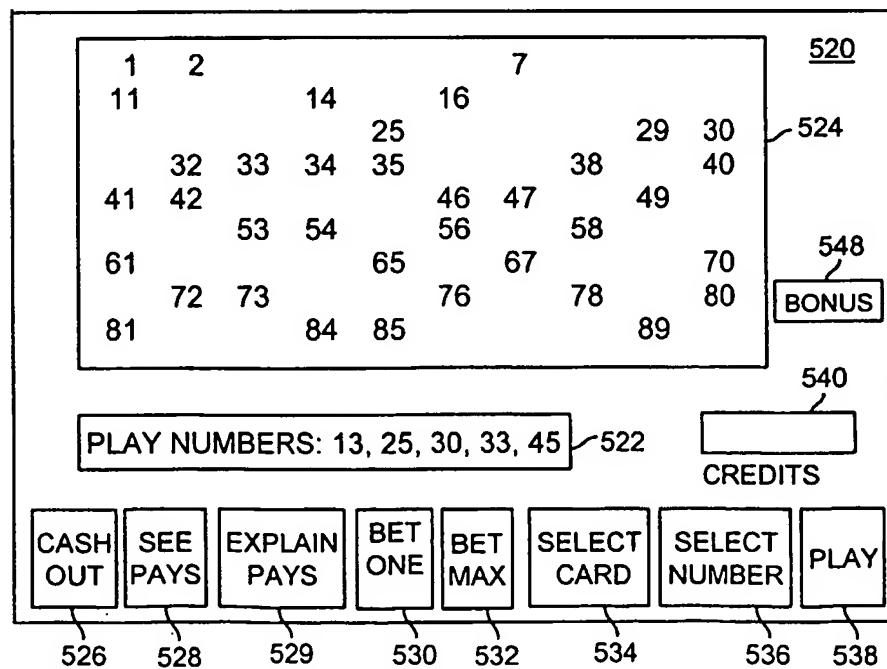
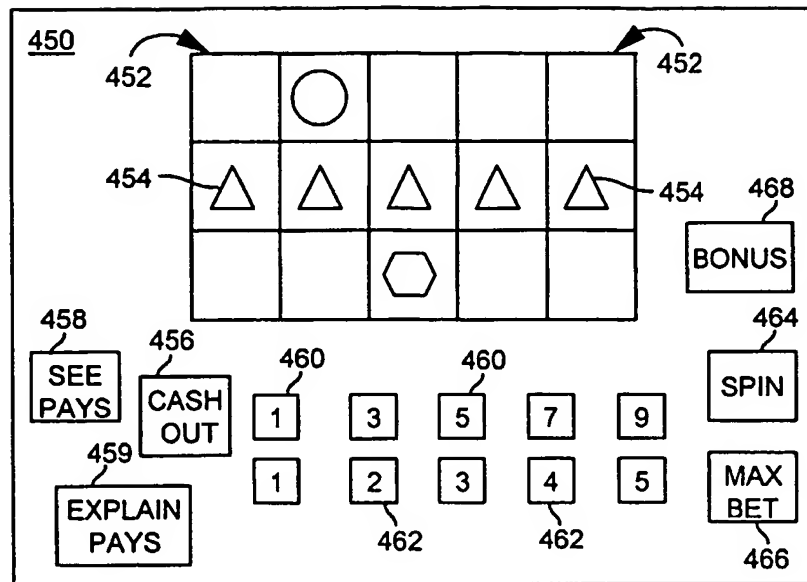


FIG. 11

FIG. 12

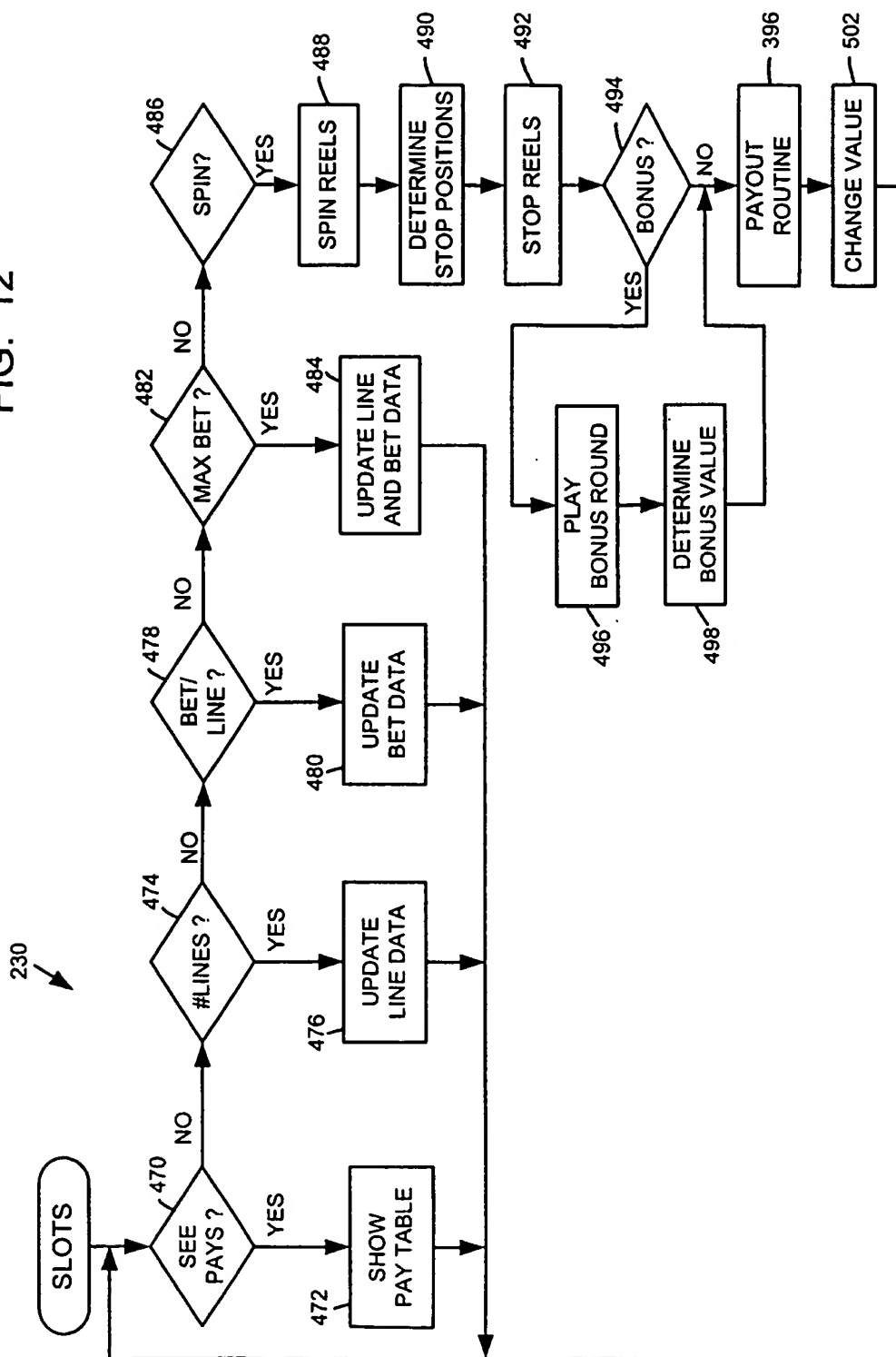
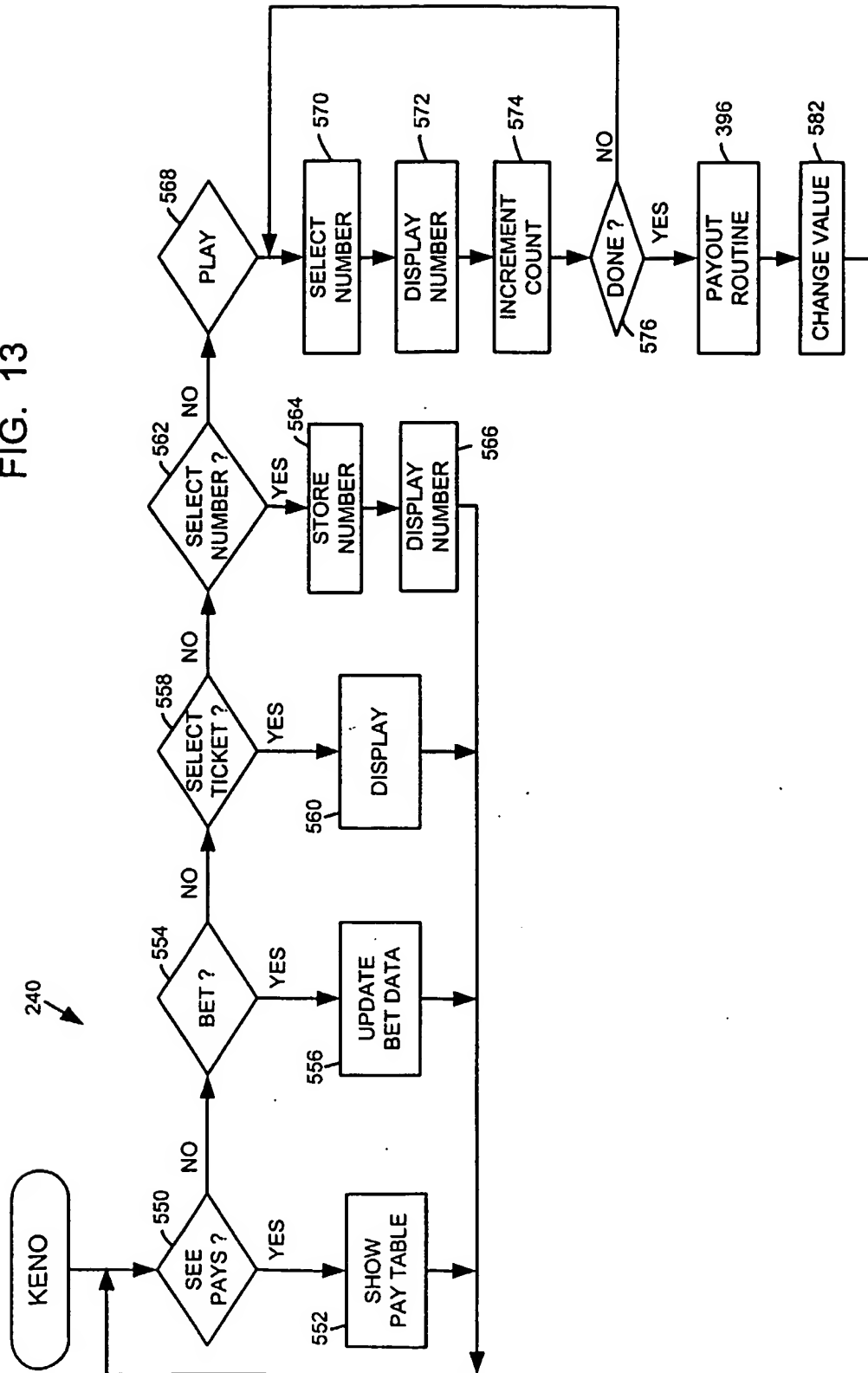


FIG. 13



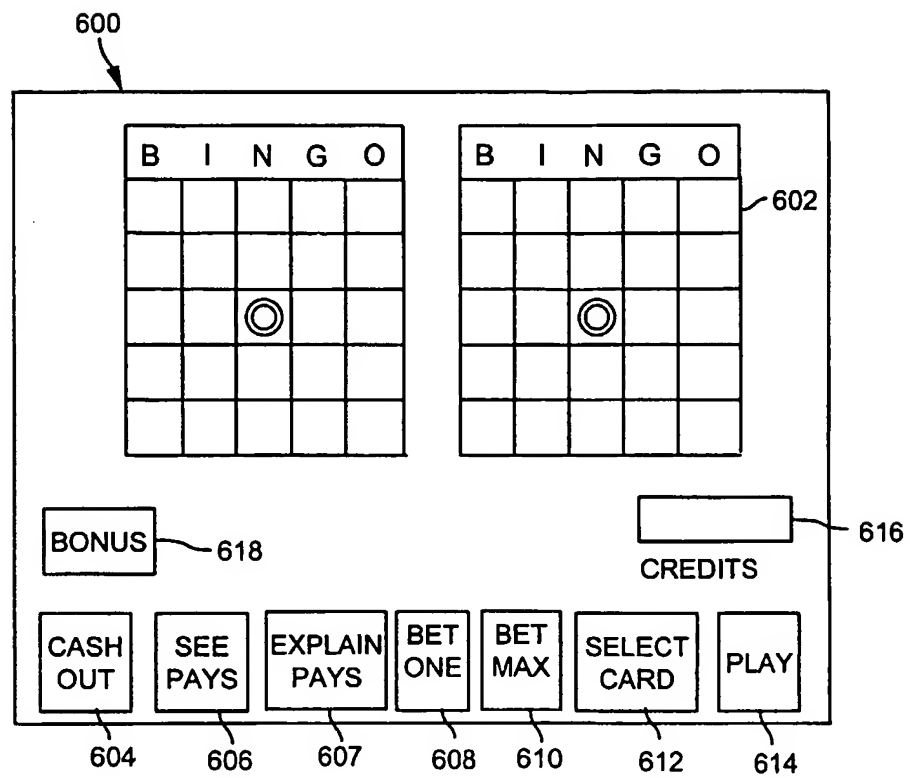


FIG. 14

FIG. 15

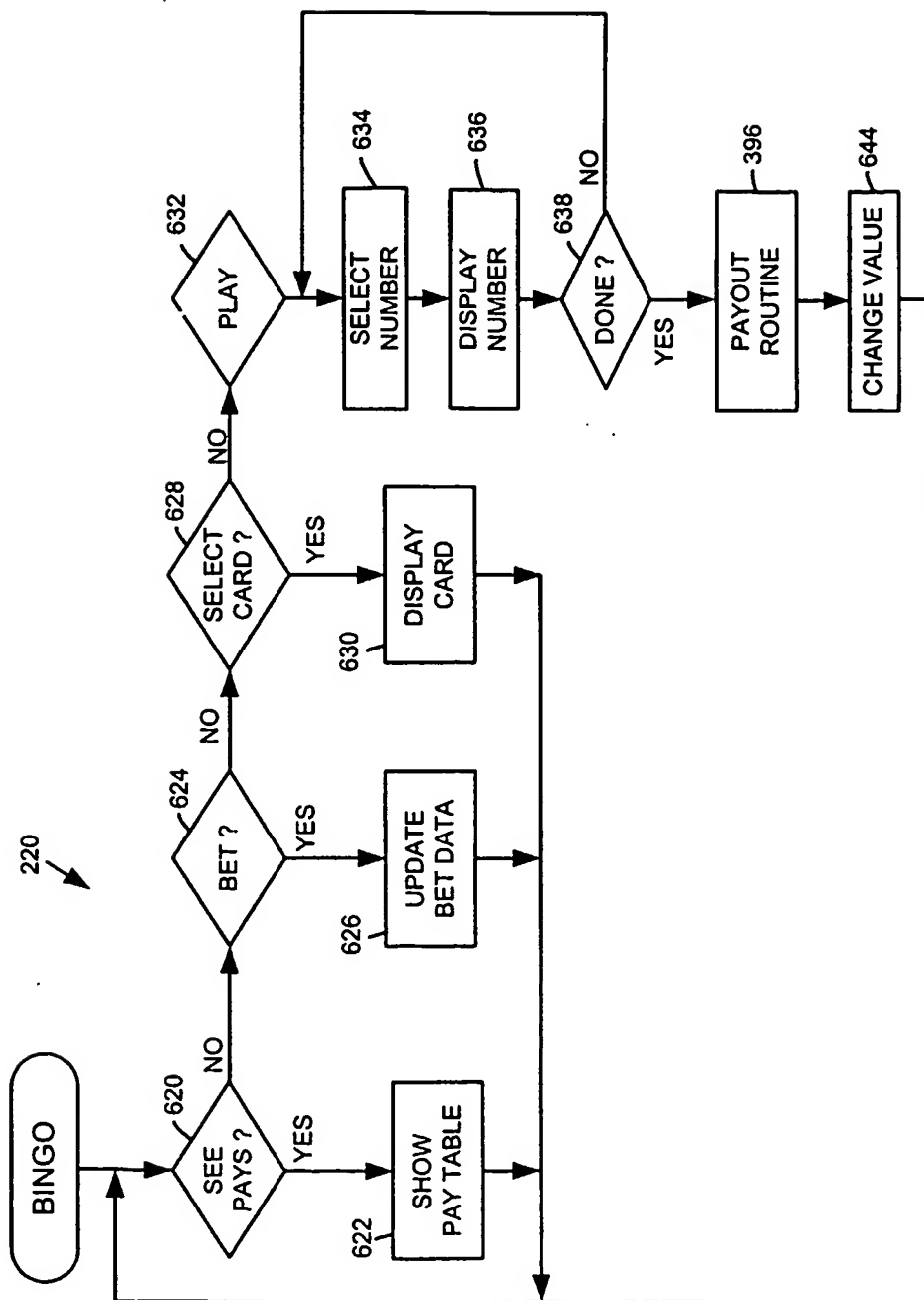
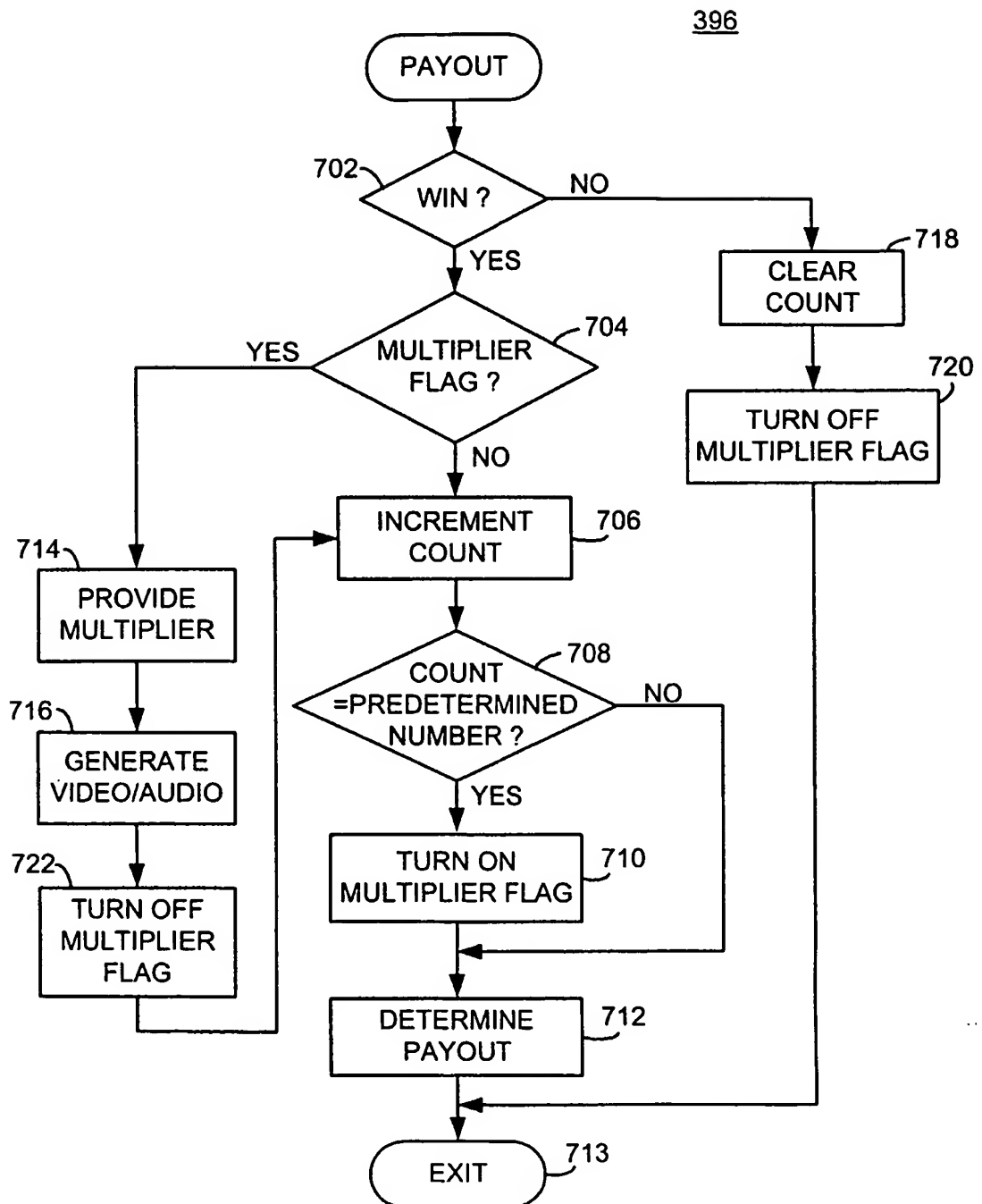


FIG. 16



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/US 02/11156

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 G07F17/32

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 G07F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 0 840 264 A (ORNSTEIN) 6 May 1998 (1998-05-06) column 6, line 48 -column 7, line 25; figure 4 ---	1-34
X	GB 1 202 691 A (LENNARD) 19 August 1970 (1970-08-19) claims 1,2; figure 1 ---	1-34
X	US 4 624 459 A (KAUFMANN) 25 November 1986 (1986-11-25) abstract; figure 3 ---	1-34
A	US 6 224 483 B1 (MAYEROFF) 1 May 2001 (2001-05-01) abstract; figure 1 ---	13,14,28
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the International search

22 November 2002

Date of mailing of the International search report

29/11/2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 02/11156

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>US 6 039 649 A (SCHULZE) 21 March 2000 (2000-03-21)</p> <p>column 4, line 34 -column 5, line 55; figure 1</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>1,7,8, 13,15, 20,21, 24,25, 28,30</p>

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 02/11156

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